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date: 29 August 2014



Head of Planning  
Development Management Camden Council  
London Borough of Camden  
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square  
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Dear Sir,

**STATION HOUSE, 9-13 SWISS TERRACE, BELSIZE ROAD, LONDON, NW6 4RR – FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS**

I am instructed by our client, Shapiro Shulman Properties to submit a full planning application for external alterations to Station House, 9-13 Swiss Terrace, Belsize Road, London, NW6 4RR ('the site' hereafter). The site extends to 0.05 hectares, and is illustrated on a site plan included within the enclosed Design Documents prepared by Assael, the appointed architect.

This letter outlines the development plan considerations relative to the proposed external alterations to the existing office accommodation to provide high quality improvements that will enhance the appearance of the building within a forgotten corner of the borough.

This application seeks planning permission for the following development:

“External alterations comprising replacement plant enclosure at roof level; replacement door and window frames; creation of six additional window openings in north elevation”

The application does not propose any additional floorspace, is not seeking to change the scale or size of the existing building, and therefore has a net effect of zero. As the appearance of the building will be improved through the high quality external alterations it will have a positive impact on neighboring buildings and local amenity. A summary of the proposed alterations is listed below.

**South Elevation**

The proposed alterations to the southern elevation are as follows:

- All windows frames will be replaced with dark grey powder coated aluminium;
- The red brick façade will be replaced by a white render;
- The roof will be covered with aluminium coping;
- The plant on the roof will be clad in zinc;
- The door will be replaced by dark grey powder coated aluminium frames to match proposed window frames.

All of these alterations are considered to be minor and will improve the appearance of the elevation through the replacement of existing façade with high quality materials.



**North Elevation**

The proposed alterations to the north elevation are as follows:

- Six new window openings proposed down the centre of the building;
- Replacement of the 12 existing central windows to match those proposed on the southern elevation;
- Existing façade will be replaced by a white render;
- Door to be painted black.

All of the above alterations to the northern elevation are considered to be minor and will improve the appearance of the elevation through the replacement of existing façade, windows and door with high quality materials. The new windows will increase the light into the building and enhance the street scene.

All the above alterations to not impact the character of the building and thus has no negative impact on its neighbouring surroundings.

**a) Development Plan**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that proposals shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan for the application site comprises the London Plan (2011), the Camden Core Strategy (2010), and Camden Development Policies DPD (2010).

The Development Plan should be read in the context of National Policy Guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which as published in March 2012. Additionally, emerging policy relevant to the site include the Proposed Submission Site Allocations DPD, which was submitted for examination in 2012 and will be examined later this year.

**i) *National Planning Policy Framework***

In March 2012 the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF replaces previous national planning policy guidance. At para 12 the NPPF states:

“National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. It is highly desirable that local planning authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place.” (Quod emphasis)

The core principle underpinning the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As clearly stated at para 14:

**“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.**

**For decision-taking this means:**

- a. **approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and**
- b. **where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:**
- **Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or**
  - **Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”**

The central theme of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and encourages local authorities to approve applications swiftly that are in accordance with the development plan.

*ii) Local Planning Policy*

The Core Strategy (2010) Policy CS14 ‘Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage’ sets out the Council’s overall strategy on promoting high quality places, seeking to ensure that Camden’s places and buildings are attractive, safe, healthy and easy to use and require development to be of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character.

The Development Plan (2010) Policy DP24 specifies that in order to secure high quality design it will require all developments including alterations to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider the following:

- Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- The character and proportions of the existing building;
- The quality of materials to be used;
- The provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;
- Existing natural features, such as topography and trees.

The requirements of this policy are reviewed below.

**b) Site Description**

The existing building currently comprises seven storeys of office accommodation across approximately 1,520m<sup>2</sup>. The existing building is very dated and is in need of investment in order to enhance the building.

There are no specific planning designations affecting the building. However, the following allocations are nearby and worthy of note:

- Adjacent to Swiss Cottage Town Centre;
- In close proximity to a designated area of Open Space;

Importantly, the site is within, adjacent to, or near to a designated conservation area, and is not in an area of flood risk. The site benefits from a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6a. The site is therefore situated in a highly sustainable location.

*Wider context*

The area of public realm immediately adjacent to the site represents a negative element of this part of the borough, which appears to have been left in a transitional stage with temporary hoardings in place, which have been in situ for several years now.

This full planning application for external alterations is supported by the following information:

- This Cover Letter;
- Site Location Plan;
- CIL Additional Information Form;
- External Alteration Design Documents prepared by Assael;
- Full Planning Application Forms and Certificates; and
- Planning Application Fee in the form of a cheque for £195 sent via the post and should be with you shortly.

It is also worth noting that this application has been submitted alongside a prior approval application to convert the office use on site to residential. This external alterations application should, however, be assessed in isolation to the above-mentioned application, as the proposed changes would be suitable for both the existing office use and proposed residential use.

**c) Policy Assessment**

As noted above, Policy DP24 seeks to secure a high standard of design quality in new development. This policy identifies a series of key considerations in achieving this. Each of these is briefly reviewed below:

Policy DP24 Criteria	Application Response
Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;	<p>The application proposed no additional scale, and the form and configuration of the existing building is unchanged.</p> <p>The proposed materials are reviewed within the application design documents, and is considered to be in broad unity with the existing character of the area.</p>

The character and proportions of the existing building;	The building character and proportions are unchanged.
The quality of materials to be used;	The materials proposed are reviewed within the enclosed 'Materials Statement: External Alterations' document. This identifies those materials that are proposed, and provides precedent images of these materials for reference. These are clearly of high quality, and a significant improvement on the existing building, which is dated and is in need of investment.
The provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;	The replacement frontages will enhance the external appearance of the building, and improve this element of the street scene.
Existing natural features, such as topography and trees.	The application has no impact on existing natural features.

As the assessment above demonstrates, the application proposals are in full accordance with development plan policy in this regard. Additionally, the proposal has fully taken into consideration the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policy guidance and are considered to fully accord with such guidance, thus, the proposed alterations to the property are supported in planning policy terms. I trust that the closed details are acceptable to you and I look forward to receiving confirmation of validation in due course. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Vernon  
Associate